United Nations A/71/892–S/2017/383

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
2 May 2017
English
Original: Russian

General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Agenda item 66
Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Letter dated 26 April 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the texts of a decision by the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Commonwealth of Independent States and of a statement by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States on the inadmissibility of discrimination and intolerance against Christians, Muslims and adherents of other faiths (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a Security Council document and as a document of the General Assembly, under item 66 of the agenda.

(*Signed*) P. **Iliichev**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

17-07064 (E) 030517 080517

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 26 April 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Decision of 7 April 2017 adopted in the city of Tashkent by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States on the inadmissibility of discrimination and intolerance against Christians, Muslims and adherents of other faiths

The Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Commonwealth of Independent States hereby decides:

1. To adopt the statement by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States on the inadmissibility of discrimination and intolerance against Christians, Muslims and adherents of other faiths (see enclosure).

2. To request the Russian Federation, as the State chairing the Commonwealth of Independent States, to transmit the text of the statement to the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and other international organizations.

For the Republic of Armenia (*Signed*)

For the Azerbaijani Republic (*Signed*)

For the Republic of Belarus (*Signed*)

For the Republic of Kazakhstan (*Signed*)

For the Kyrgyz Republic (*Signed*)

For the Republic of Moldova (*Signed*)

For the Russian Federation (*Signed*)

For the Republic of Tajikistan (*Signed*)

For Turkmenistan

For Ukraine

For the Republic of Uzbekistan (*Signed*)

Enclosure

Statement by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States on the inadmissibility of discrimination and intolerance against Christians, Muslims and adherents of other faiths

The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States,

Taking into account the relevant international norms of human rights enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and other international instruments,

Confirming the right of every person to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, and also the equality of all persons regardless of their attitude to religion,

Noting that any form of discrimination on the basis of religious affiliation or beliefs constitutes a violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms and that every crime motivated by hatred against religion or beliefs, xenophobia and intolerance must be firmly and equally condemned, and also that all persons must be accorded equal protection before the law,

Expressing concern about continuing manifestations of intolerance, violence and terrorist acts motivated by religious affiliation or beliefs,

1. *Declare* that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, including the freedom to adhere to, or adopt, the religion or beliefs of one's choice, and also not to adhere to or practise any religion, to change one's religion or beliefs, and to practise one's religion or expound beliefs both individually, and together with others, publicly or privately, through study, worship, and performance of traditional religious and ritual ceremonies and exercises, provided that such actions do not violate the rights of other people and do not contravene the national legislation and international obligations of the States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States,

2. *Confirm* their resolve to uphold human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief for everyone without distinction as to race, ethnic origin, gender, language or religion, as well as the need to pursue a policy of inculcating respect for places of worship and religious sites, monuments, cemeteries and shrines, and also protecting them from vandalism and destruction,

3. *Call upon* political, religious and social leaders to continue to work to prevent and counteract intolerance and discrimination against Christians, Muslims and adherents of other faiths, with full respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights,

4. *Note* the importance of promoting mutual tolerance and respect among people practising different religions and not practising them, and among religious organizations of different denominations, and the inadmissibility of religious and other fanaticism and extremism, and of actions aimed at sowing discord, exacerbating relations and inciting hatred between different faiths.

5. *Firmly condemn* all manifestations of intolerance, discrimination, violence and terrorist acts, and also use of the language of hatred in relation to Christians, Muslims and adherents of other faiths,

6. *Declare* that terrorist acts perpetrated by individuals or groups in the name of particular religions or beliefs can never serve as justification for intolerance against individuals on grounds of their religious affiliation,

7. *Consider* the association of terrorism and violent extremism with any particular religion to be absolutely unacceptable,

8. *Express concern* about the increasing number of incidents directed against Christians, Muslims and adherents of other faiths in various regions of the world, including acts of intolerance, discrimination, prejudice and violence, as well as hate crimes, which constitute a threat to stability and security,

9. *Note* the special role of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, which has become an effective platform for global inter-religious dialogue on the prevention and counteracting of intolerance and discrimination on religious grounds,

10. *Resolve* to continue to make efforts to consolidate the position of the international community on the issue of the inadmissibility of discrimination against Christians, Muslims and adherents of other faiths, in particular at the international human rights bodies of the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe.

United Nations A/71/893–S/2017/381

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
3 May 2017
English
Original: Russian

General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Agenda item 68
Promotion and protection of human rights

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Letter dated 26 April 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a position paper entitled "Human rights in the context of armed conflict" (see annex), prepared in connection with the Security Council briefing on the maintenance of international peace and security: human rights and prevention of armed conflict, held on 18 April 2017.

I should be grateful if you would have it circulated as a document of the Security Council and the General Assembly, under agenda item 68.

(*Signed*) P. **Ilichev**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

17-07152 (E) 080517 100517

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 26 April 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Human rights in the context of armed conflict (position paper)

The current global situation reflects a rapidly changing structure of challenges and threats that are transnational in nature. New and dangerous hotspots have been added to long-standing conflicts. There is a high risk of breakdown in interfaith and intercivilizational relations. This has a negative impact on people whose fundamental rights, including the right to life, are increasingly being violated.

The promotion and protection of human rights, together with the maintenance of peace and security, and development issues, are key activities of the United Nations. The main reason for the establishment of the United Nations, as set forth in its Charter seventy years ago, was to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, and to promote social progress. Shortly thereafter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted.

In the years since then, the Organization has developed and operated a wide range of instruments for the protection and promotion of human rights. The Security Council has never been one of those instruments.

Various aspects of the issue of human rights are present in the work of the Council, and they are periodically addressed during thematic or country discussions. However, the Security Council is not intended to fulfil the tasks of ensuring the observance of human rights and is not designed to conduct a substantive analysis of the situation in this sphere. Under its mandate, the Council cannot serve as a forum for discussions of any human rights situations, wherever they may be.

The Council is an organ with unique powers to make decisions, including those providing for the use of force in situations that pose a threat to peace, a breach of peace or an act of aggression.

No international human rights instrument provides for the delegation of any oversight or other functions by the Security Council in this sphere. The Council has only those powers with which it was endowed by Member States through the Charter. Seeking to go beyond those powers inevitably encroaches on the competence of States or other bodies of the United Nations system, each of which has its own tasks and role.

The promotion in the Security Council of a human rights perspective linked to the objectives of maintaining international peace and security provides a tool for exerting political pressure on individual countries. The expansion of the human rights component within the Council will inevitably lead to further criticism of it going beyond its mandate, its politicization and double standards in its work, which undermines trust in the Security Council.

Human rights issues should be dealt with in the specialized bodies, primarily in the Third Committee of the General Assembly and in the United Nations Human Rights Council. The United Nations system will be able to function effectively and fulfil its mandates in a meaningful way only if it performs efficiently in each area of its work. There is a need for a more cautious and careful approach to the current division of labour within the United Nations.

Conflict prevention is an important issue in the context of maintaining international peace and security. Indeed, without guaranteeing sustainable peace and

security and successful conflict prevention, it is impossible to ensure respect for human rights. It is impossible to work effectively on the promotion and protection of such rights where blood is shed and civilians die. The prevention and settlement of armed conflict are the main prerequisites for correcting human rights situations, and not vice versa.

We do not share the view that human rights violations are the main cause of armed conflict or that human rights protection is a key instrument for preventing them. Practice demonstrates otherwise. Political pressure and sanctions, interference in the internal affairs of other States and attempts to undermine their sovereignty, including under the pretext of protecting human rights, are completely contrary to the goal of conflict prevention. Such actions result in serious crises, the destabilization of entire regions, a rise in terrorist threats and the creation of large areas of chaos and violence, where it is impossible to guarantee not only political and economic rights, but even the basic right to life.

The main responsibility for preventing armed conflicts and for promoting and protecting human rights lies with States. The task of the United Nations is to foster cooperation that improves the international legal framework and facilitates the establishment and development of the potential of State institutions, while respecting their sovereignty and the division of labour within the Organization itself.